

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Istook Statement on PNTR Vote

“Recognizing how important it is, I wanted to consider every factor before deciding how to cast my vote on Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. The key issues, of course, are national security, the growth of the American economy and workforce, and human rights violations in China.

“**Trade.** It’s not a question of removing American trade barriers. It’s a question of removing Chinese trade barriers, and of whether we will create new American trade barriers. They want our products, but China can and will buy from other countries instead of from us if we put restrictions back in place.

“**Human Rights.** On human rights, it is impossible for us to control the policies of China. But trade brings openings and opportunities. When our businesses and our products go to China, our principles are piggy-backing with them. This doesn’t make change happen rapidly, but it does make change happen.

“**National Security.** National security has been my main concern, because China uses its military to operate many of its overseas businesses. They aggressively pursue technology they can apply to their military, especially in developing nuclear missiles.

“I’ve concluded: The real threat to our national security is not trade. The real threat is an Administration that is lax, careless and callous toward protecting our national security. The evidence is overwhelming: Foreigners roam freely through our State Department, even thumbing through “Top Secret” files. The Pentagon is excluded from decisions on what technology to protect. Agents of the Chinese communists are invited to White House fundraisers.

“The Clinton Administration has not followed or enforced the laws intended to protect our country. They’ve even made it harder for businesses to be careful. For example, for over a year and a half they have failed and refused to prepare and publish the list of businesses that are operated by the Chinese military, so American companies would be forewarned and would exercise extra caution in their dealings with them, especially related to restricted technology.

“The problem is not normal trade, but abnormal disregard for our national security. The solution is not less trade, but a new President.

“Knowing that we’ll have a President in a few months, I don’t won’t to punish Americans business and workers by shutting us off from the booming Chinese market.

“I have not taken this vote lightly. As a member of the subcommittee which handles all Pentagon funding, I’m aware of the consequences of China’s military build-up. I’ve been through multiple classified briefings involving the Chinese military, the classified portions of the Rumsfeld Commission and Cox Commission reports, visited with China’s number two military leader last year, visited with our own military, and consulted with the heads of the Congressional committees dealing with our national defense and intelligence efforts.

“I intend to vote in favor of PNTR.”